Crown Land Policy

Province of British Columbia
Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing
HONOURABLE ANTHONY J. BRUMMET, MINISTER

85-1292/

MINISTER'S STATEMENT

The goal of the Government of British Columbia and the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing is to ensure that provincial Crown land is used and managed in ways that contribute to the development and maintenance of a sound economy, and that opportunities are provided for a high-quality life and a healthy environment.

This goal is pursued in an atmosphere of increasing competition for a limited and finite land base. The following principles and policies will guide the decisions of my ministry throughout the 1980s, by providing a basis for decisions that will achieve our goal. These principles and policies ensure that the land will be administered wisely, and that this invaluable resource will continue to make a contribution to all British Columbians.

A.J. Brummet
Minister

THE LAND RESOURCE

Our land is a land of contrasts. Its varied physiography, climate, vegetation, and hydrology produce a diversity of landscapes that offer both challenges and opportunities for the management and use of our land and its resources.

More than one-third of our provincial land is alpine and sub-alpine and therefore not suitable for agriculture or commercial timber production, but may well be valuable recreational land, wildlife land, and a storehouse of water and minerals. Similarly, muskeg and wetlands — which make up four per cent of our land base — are often not usable for agriculture or forestry. However, they also provide habitat for wildlife and waterfowl.

Approximately half the province is forested land. These lands are also important for grazing, recreation, and wildlife. But sensible land allocation requires blending these resource uses with the demands for settlements, agriculture, hydro-electric reservoirs, and utility corridors.

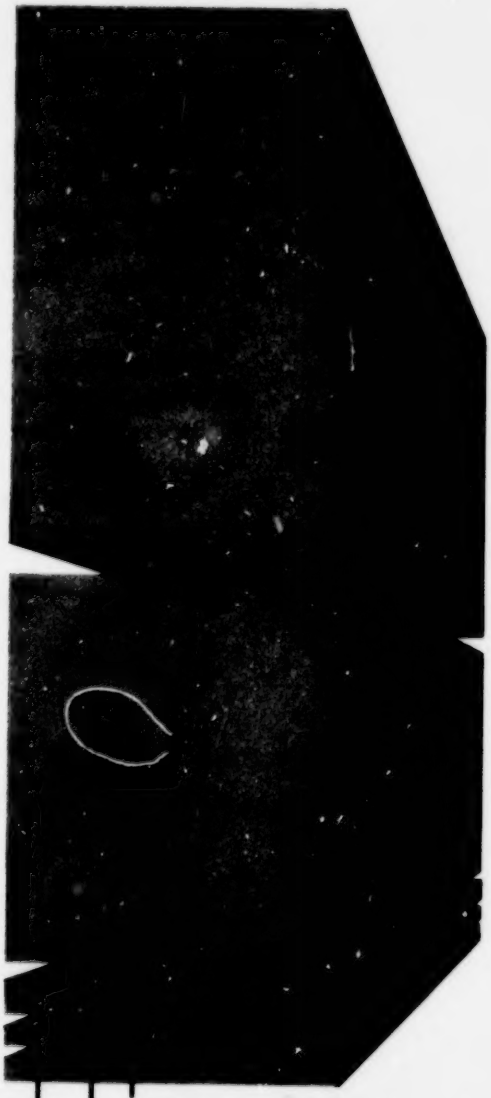
Less than four per cent of the land is useful for agriculture, and it too is highly variable in its productivity. Much of this land is capable of producing only a limited range of crops, yet the most productive farmland is located in the Lower Fraser Valley. And often it is these highly-productive lands that are most in demand for urban development.

PROVINCIAL LAND

LAND STATUS %

Other	
Crown Land	<1
National Park	<1
Indian Reserve	<1

LAND COVER %



Muskeg and Wetland	4
Lake and River	2
Crop	<1
Open Grassland	<1
Urban	<1

PRINCIPLE

Decisions on the use of the land must be made on a daily basis. Some decisions may commit land to specific uses for generations and realistically be irreversible. In these decisions, the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing recognizes that the natural environment offers opportunities and constraints to land use. In so doing, every effort is made to respect the fundamental laws of natural systems and to develop land policies and programs that work with rather than against these natural laws, to achieve a wise use of public lands.

POLICY

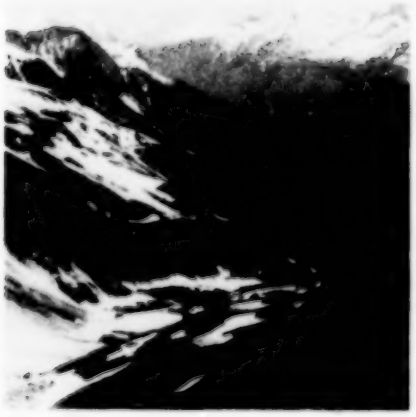
The ministry makes land decisions in accordance with allocation policies of land use plans that incorporate information on the physical and biological characteristics of land — in addition to social and economic considerations — or by a review with key agencies.

PRINCIPLE

Economic, social, and technological change is occurring at an ever-increasing rate that demands flexible and responsive government organizations. The ministry recognizes this need in its public land policies and program administration.

POLICY

The ministry is committed to corporate reviews of its statutes, policies, and programs to ensure program effectiveness.



PRINCIPLE

In these times of restraint, it is imperative that the ministry insist upon an efficient administration to achieve an effective delivery of appropriate lands at current values, to assist with economic recovery.

POLICY

The ministry ensures that its land disposition and administration operation offers an equitable, timely, and high-quality service to the public.

PRINCIPLE

As a key administrator of land in B.C., the ministry encourages the development of human and technological skills in making land decisions, by providing leadership at every level within the ministry.

POLICY

The ministry implements a staff development program to enhance the skills required to be a steward and a leader.

Society is composed of individuals who solely — or in groups — represent a great diversity of interests. Our traditional democratic process for public participation in government needs to be supported by specific provision of a fair and equitable process to ensure public opportunity to contribute to decision-making.

The ministry develops and manages programs in a manner that encourages co-operation and consultation with a wide range of agencies, organizations, and public involved in land use decisions.

PRINCIPLE

The free exercise of private rights and obligations associated with land ownership is encouraged by the ministry. The ministry supports the operation of the market as the prime allocator of privately-owned land, unless clearly demonstrated to be contrary to the public interest.

POLICY

The ministry supports the policy of private ownership of settlement, agricultural, industrial, and commercial lands, while retaining public ownership of the vast areas of resource-based lands. This ensures public access to the greater portions of land, and options for use in the long-term.

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POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL